THE HVMBLE PETITION

OF THE INHABITANTS

of the County of

DORSET,

PRESENTED TO

HIS MAIESTY

AT RAGLAND THE 8th

of JULY, 1645.

WITH

HIS MAIESTIES

Gratious Answer thereunto.

OXFORD,

Printed by *Leonard Lichfield*, Printer to

the Vniversity. 1645.

To the KING'S most Excellent MAJESTY.

The Humble Petition of the distressed Protestant Inhabitants of the County of DORSET,

Sheweth,

THat the Petitioners, since these unhappy Civill warres, having in a deeper measure then other Subjects of this Kingdome, suffered by meanes of the many Garrisons within this little County, (they being tenne in number) and the Armies yearely drawn into these parts by reason thereof, did lately hope (whilest the Treaty betweene Your Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament continued) once againe to have been restored to the blessing of Peace, by an happy accommodation of the present differences without further effusion of Christian blood.

But finding such their great hopes to be frustrate, and having too too just cause to feare, what they are not yet brought to the extremity of miseries, which the continuance of this warre will in all probability produce; and conceiving that nothing under God can reduce this miserably devided Nation unto any proportion of it's former happinesse, save only an unfeigned desire of reconciliation,

Doe most humbly beseech your most Excellent Majesty, to lend your favourable eare to the renewing of a Treaty for Peace, when it shall be proposed to Your Majesty by the two Houses of Parliament, (for the proposall whereof, the Petitioners have made their addresses unto them) that before this wretched Kingdome, through the divisions and debility thereof, be made a Prey for a Forraigne Nation, such a Peace may be established therein, as may be for the glory of God, the maintenance of the true reformed Protestant Religion, Your Majesties Royall Person, Honour and Estate, the Power and Priviledges of Parliament, and the Lawfull Rights and Liberties of your Subjects.

And they likewise humbly beseech Your Majesty, that during such Treaty, Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to consent

the Resistance of the Enemy, Your Majesty pursuing the Counsels of the said two Houses of Parliament, and the same Peace & Treaty tending to Peace may not proceed in Blood.

But if Almighty God hath decreed the further scourging of this Nation (being not hitherto fitted for so great a mercy, as the enjoyment of Peace) by the continuance of these Civill Warres, and by consequence thereof, a necessity ensue of keeping some of the Garrisons within this County for the defence of the same, Your distressed Suppliants (who are not able any longer to subsist under the intollerable burthen of contrary Commands of the said Garrisons, and of the Ordinance aforesaid, to be by Contribution, Taxes, free quarter and Plunder, have so lately left Your Petitioners substance for themselves, much lesse any ability of supplying the Souldiers further necessities, or arbitrary demands,

Most humbly beseech Your sacred Majesty, whereas wanted upon this Necessity so far effect upon the miseries of the Petitioners Poore distressed Souls as also Your Cavetz, as to condescend to the incurring in their hands, so many of Your Garrisons, held by any of Your Majesties Forces therein, as shall be thought necessary to be continued, in case Your said two Houses of Parliament shall upon Your Subjects Petition, dispose them in that behalfe (as the like for the Garrisons in their hands) to be maintained at the charge of the Petitioners, and not by them to be delivered up unto any Person or Persons whatsoever, but unto such only as by the joynt consent of Your Majesty, and the said two Houses of Parliament, shall be authorized to receive the same.

And they humbly pray that, during their service in maintaining the said Garrisons, Your Majesty will be pleased graciously to exempt the Petitioners from all manner of Payments, and other Charges towards these Warres.

And for as much as many wicked and lewd Persons, taking advantage of these times of discontent to the great dishonour of Almighty God, and Scandall of Your Majesties Government, doe daily commit many haynous offences against God and the established Lawes of this Your Realme, and through Want of execution of Justice escape unpunished.

Your Petitioners further humbly beseech Your most Excellent Majesty, That the Acts of Parliament, which but are not, and may be presently put in Execution against the Offendors, by such Officers

disturbance of those Officers in the due execution of it; and that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased, that all such Persons as either are, or have been in Armes, or otherwise assistant unto either Party in these unhappy Warres, may be permitted (if they shall desire it) to lay downe their Armes, and to returne to their wonted Habitations, that the like favour to returne may be granted unto all others who for feare of either Party have absented themselves from the places of their usuall abode, or which by reason of their affection to either Party are imprisoned, or otherwise restrained of their liberty.

And least any misconstruction may be made of Your Petitioners intents in assembling themselves at several places of this Your County,

They humbly remonstrate unto Your most Excellent Majesty, That their armes then have been for no other ends, but sincerely to represent their great grievances by way of humble petition to Your Sacred Majesty, and to the true Peeres of Parliament, and to associate themselves (as their duties & conscyences lawfully may) for the maintenance of the true Reformed Protestant Religion, the preservation of their Lawes, Liberties and Properties against all Blunderers, and all other unlawfull Violences, until it shall please Almighty God to put an end to these sad Distractions.

Which that it may readily be effected, Your Majesties most humble Petitioners, with humble hearts and bended knees, shall ever pray unfeignedly to Almighty God for His Grace, and to preserve Your Majestie long and prosperously to Raigne over Us.

This Petition is subscribed by above ten Thousand of Your Majesties Loyall Subjects of this County, now in Armes on either Party in the present Warres.

This is a true Copy, as it was presented by us unto His Majesty, the 8th day of *July*, 1645.

HENRY GOCHE.

THOM. YONGE.

At the Court at RAGLAND, *July the 9th*, 1645.

By His Majesties speciall Directions and Command.

HIS Majesty being himselfe so deeply afflicted with the Miseries and Calamities brought upon all His poore Subjects in generall by this unnaturall Warre, doth not at all wonder, that the grievous and most particular sufferings of the Inhabitants of the County of *Dorset*, should urge them to seek ease and relieſe, though by wayes lesse regular, and being entirely perswaded that their intentions in their late assemblies, and in this their present addresse to His *Majesty* are full of Duty and Loyalty to His Person and Government, is so farre from reprehending them, that He is very glad to find so many of His good Subjects united in a joynt and hearty sense of the publick, and that by this particular application of themselves to His *Majesty*, they have afforded him the meanes to informe them more particularly of the Justice of His Cause, and of His sincere and constant desires and endeavours for Peace, then appeares by their profest neutrality hitherto they have been; which that he may the better doe, and that there may thereby be wrought a perfect Union and Conjunction betwixt His *Majesty* and those who professe to be so sincerely affected with the same Pious desires of the publick good, His *Majesty* will very speedily send unto the Petitioners, or unto such as they shall depute within the said County, Persons further instructed in the Course of all His *Majesties* former proceedings, and of His present Resolutions, and in the meane time as an instance of His Gracious Intentions towards the Petitioners, He is pleased to give these particular Answers to their severall desires.

To the first, That when ever Propositions of Peace shall be made unto His *Majesty* by those at *Westminster*, His Eares shall be alwayes open unto them, and He not onely ready to receive them, but even to seek and solicite for them, when ever He can probably Judge that they will not reject His Overture, whereof the Petitioners need make no doubt, His *Majesty* having neglected no occasion to invite them to a Treaty of Peace,

Peace, the blessing whereof was never more to be implored of Almighty God, nor to be more industriously endeavoured by all good men, then at this time, when without it (as the Petitioners well observe) this Kingdom is likely to be made the prey of a Forreigne Nation; The *Scots* being at this present advanc't with an Army so farre into the heart of this Kingdome, as already to threaten even the *Westerne* parts; And His *Majesty* doth further promise in the Word of a King, that if a Treaty may be procured, He will seek no other Conditions of Peace then those mentioned by the Petitioners; that is, The glory of God in the maintenance of the true Reformed Protestant Religion, The Iust and inseparable Rights of the Crowne, The Iust Power and Priviledges of Parliament, and the Lawfull Rights and Liberty of the Subject; and all these, under none of those Ambiguous termes, whereby the contrary Party have deluded and miled so many of his good Subjects, pretending that they fight for the same, but making the knowne Lawes of the Land (which cannot deceive) the measure of each particular.

To the second His *Majesty* doth promise, That, if a Treaty may be procured, He will earnestly desire a Cessation of Arms, (as he did in the last at *Uxbridge*, though to His great griefe not consented unto by the other Party) to the end that a Treaty tending to Peace may not proceed in Bloud; And His *Majesty* desires the Book of the said Treaty at *Uxbridge*, be read to the Petitioners for their satisfaction in this Point, and the manifestation of His sincere desires of Peace.

To the third, That in Case for the sinnes of the Nation, the obstinacy of the other Party cannot be overcome, but that His *Majesty* and His People must yet be further Scourged by Gods afflicting hand of Warre, that His *Majesty* is so deeply sensible of his Suppliants, and all His other good Subjects Sufferings, by Contributions, Taxes, Free-Quarter, and Plunder, that whatsoever can be done on His *Majesties* part in the three first by all the moderation that can possibly be used, and to the latter, by the severest Iustice, shall be carefully and effectually endeavoured; As for the point of trusting in the Petitioners hands such of His Forts and Garrisons as shall be thought necessary to be continued, His *Majesty* makes no doubt, but if Peace may not be procured, it shall so evidently appeare unto the Petitioners, who have been the Authors, and are the Contrivers of their miseries, that they will prove the heartiest Champi-

ons

ons of their King, of the crown, and Gods Cause, and consequently beas fit Persons as any that His *Majesty* can Chuse to be entrusted with what so ever concernes His Safety, and their Protection thus for the particulars, as also for the future maintaining of the same Graces. His *Majesty* will by those whom he shall employ make the Petitioners advise with them of the time and manner how His Service may be done most to their satisfaction.

And to the last, that the chiefe calamity of Warre is the silencing of the Lawes, and if it were possible, to uphold their due and current execution, the Sword could no longer Rage, but as farre, for as it is possible, that Military affaires can be govern'd by Legall inflictions on offenders. His *Majesty* is very desirous to give the Petitioners all imaginable satisfaction, but it being a matter of such intricacy, the particular way and Method of it must be opened by further debate. As for the point of leave for all His *Majesties* misled Subjects, to lay down Armes, and return to their habitacions, there to live unquestioned, and unmolested, It is that whereunto His Majesty hath already many times given more then a permission, That is, a Specifi Invitation, by several gratious Proclamations, which for the Petitioners satisfaction he shall very willingly renew. As for the other part, which concernes those at present engaged in His *Majesties* Service, & those under restraint, His *Majesty* is too confident of the Petitioners affections to Him and His Kingdoms Safety, to believe (while His Enemies are so strong, & dayly forcing every man to take up Armes against Him, and while a Forreigne Nation is in the bowells of the Kingdome ready to devoure it) that they would wish Him one man lesse in His Army, or one man more at liberty to joyne with them.

As for all such Persons as are absent from their homes, and not already engaged in His *Majesties* service, it shall be very acceptable to His *Majesty*, that they returne to their owne homes, and tend the service, and quiet of their Countries according to the Petitioners desire. And as for all Acts of Parliament and Lawes unrepealed in what concernes the Civill Government, as particularly for Assizes, Sessions, and the like, The Petitioners undertaking the Protection of His *Majesties* Ministers of Justice, His *Majesty* will issue His Commands unto them all respectively, to perform the their constant duties, according to the establisht Lawes.

GEORGE DIGBY.

FINIS.